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(SNP066) Deaconess Mary Sandys Hutton
interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed
by Barbara Maynes

Mary Sandys Hutton

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Deaconess Hutton

interviewed by Dorothy Smith
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date? 1

Deaconess Hutton: ...isn't that?

com

Dorothy Smith: Exactly, exactly...you are free to answer or not answer anything you want.

Now, I understand that they had fairly large families, most of them.

DH: This is ~~com~~.

DS: This is ~~com~~. They had fairly large families, am I right?

DH: In the early days, yes.

DS: That's right.

DH: Not so large now.

DS: No.

DH: Much smaller families now.

DS: Right. But with those children, was there a good survival rate?

DH: Umm ... in the early days we lost babies. But we started a public health nurse and of course we also started ... the State provided us with a public clinic. Children's clinic, baby clinic.

DS: About when was this?

DH: Oh ... I'm sure I have that on this article now. I brought some articles out. Let's think for a second or two. I came in '34. Umm ... I would say in the late Thirties.

DS: In the late Thirties.

DH: Thirty-seven, thirty-eight ... sometime around then.

DS: I know that made a tremendous impact.

DH: Oh, it did. That was really the beginning of the changing.

DS: Before they had that, how did they care for their children?

DH: With all the tender love that a home can give.

DS: Great.

DH: With a mother just loving a child through sickness and throughout

DS: Yes. Were the babies brought into the world by midwives?



DH: Midwives. Or by just being delivered in the home, period.

DS: Oh. Were there any ... that was rough.

DH: That was rural doctor that lived in Stanley, a Doctor Smith who came from time to time but it was very hard to get a doctor to come up here.

DS: Well, I can understand that. And I imagine that they didn't have too much money to pay them..

DH: No, but Dr. Smith would even come without pay sometimes.

DS: Umhmm.

DH: And the doctors in Luray were wonderful to me when I came and they would tell me on the phone what I could do and then I would do ~~it~~ to the utmost of my ability and then I would call them back in time and say, 'This worked,' or 'That didn't work,' or something else. 'What else can I do?' and they would try to tell me further what could be done.

DS: Well then, in other words, the people realized that they did not truly know how to take care of their babies and children.

DH: Well, they were glad to get help. I wouldn't say they'd acknowledge they didn't know because they had lived many years and years and generations without somebody.

DS: Yes.

DH: So of course they did have an instinct, just natural instinct and love and devotion and concern and did their utmost for them.

DS: Were there any particular childhood illnesses that you recall?

DH: Umhmm. Well, of course diptheria was still prevalent and typhoid fever and measles, mumps, chickenpox, all the regular children's diseases.

DS: It's a surprise that those came in when the people were really so isolated.

DH: Well, they were isolated and yet of course, from time to time, somebody went to town on horseback.

DS: Yes.

DH: To get other things that they didn't have.

DS: Umhmm ... and would bring it back with them.

DH: And would bring it back, more than likely. And then, from time to time, as this article tells you, there were itinerant preachers, who came up and held services under the pine trees here. This is why it's called Pine Grove.

DS: Yes.

DH: Because there was a whole grove of pines up in this area and we used to have outdoor services under the pines and they would put stumps of logs down and the boards across the fields and that's where the first services were held is under the pine trees.

DS: You know, this is getting ahead of one of the questions I wanted to ask ... now when this itinerant preacher came, would they then hold a whole group of weddings, for instance?

DH: Well ...

DS: Or baptisms?

DH: Eventually, they began to baptize, but not babies so much as adults. And they would baptize in the creek of course and The weddings were of course performed but not too many.

DS: Umhmm. O.K., now, do you know of any particular herbs or medecines or poultices that they used?

DH: Well, I'm sure they used everything that they knew in the woods, because they still do a great deal of going into the woods. Some of the people who I worked with gathered well, the wild lettuce and things of that kind.

DS: Wild lettuce?

DH: Umhmm.

DS: Umm ... They would^{just} use that for eating.

DH: To eat. And they would use of course they herbs that they knew.

DS: What herbs were they, do you recall?

DH: No, I don't.

DS: No.

DH: It's long time, because I never used them. After I came, I had a medicine^{chest} in the Rockhouse and I did a great deal of First Aid and the general nursing that I could carry out. And when it got beyond my ability then I'd call one of the doctors and ask what I could do then and I'd carry out his orders and then if that didn't work, I'd either take them in or if they were too sick, I could get somebody to come.

DS: Isn't it a surprise that the people accepted you and didn't say to you, "Well, I've got a poultice t_hat would do just as good."

DH: Well, of course sometimes I'd use theirs instead of mine.

DS: Unhuh.

DH: Because, after all, theirs had worked and it was alright.

DS: Do you recall any of those?

DH: No, they ... that's been many, many long years since I've done any of that kind of work.

DS: Were most of the houses when you first came built of logs?

DH: No, there were only one or two real log houses here. Most of them had been built frame ... small frame houses.

DS: Well, didn't the people from the mountains come down here to you?

DH: Uh ... not after they had a worker up on top. You see, they had a worker up there and they ...

DS: With Pollock?

DH: Umhmm. Miss Janet Wolten was up there but before her, Miss Hale was here and she was a nurse.

DS: Unhuh.

DH: And she did a great deal of medical work up in these mountains and then she went up on Tanner's Ridge to live and when she went up on Tanner's Ridge to live, other workers came here and ... it was just goin' on then _____

DS: OK. Do you know how they cooked? Did they make their own butter and did they have outdoor brick ovens?

DH: Oh yes, yes, yes! They churned. Not too many of them in the days since we have been here had outdoor ovens but I imagine earlier, in the early days they may have. But they cooked their bread in woodstoves and had heaters to heat their homes just as we had over there in Rockhouse. I had several of those kwen heaters and if you wanted a warm house you had to keep running from room to room stokin' the kwen heaters! (Laughter)

DS: Is that spelled K-E-A-N ?

DH: Kwen. K-W-E-N, kwen heater. They're little tin stoves that you took the lid off and put the piece of wood in.

DS: Unhuh ... yeah? Did they make sorghum?

DH: They made sorghum and they made ... um, breads of course from farm ... little farm patches, not real farms, but just little spots of corn and vegetables, mostly potatoes and beans.

DS: Just enough.

DH: Many owned hogs.

DS: Good!

DH: ... had hogs, most of the people.

DS: Cows?

DH: A few had cows.

DS: Those that did not have cows, how did the babies get milk?

DH: From nursing ... the mothers.

DS: Yeah, and then, from then on, no milk?

DH: No.

DS: That's bad. Were there any cases of rickets that you know of?

DH: Very few, extremely few. A few, but not too many. They were a healthy stock.

DS: Yes! They were!

DH: They were good stock.

DS: Yeah. Speaking of that, did you hear any stories from any of them how they arrived here? You know ... families from generations back?

DH: Of course, the story is that they came from ... when Spotswood came over the Spotswood Trail ... down and looked into the Valley that from then on people began to come across the hill into the Valley. ~~There are also other stories told that people came up the Valley from Roanoke way up this way and from~~ down to the Valley because of its beauty and of its loveliness, its richness of the the soil and atmosphere and other, so it got populated in the Valley. And there were people passing on from the Valley up this way to go over the mountain but they would get up into these communities, these little hollows and they'd just settle there.

DS: Umhmm. What were the predominant names?

DH: Well, up here the names are Weakley, Gray, Jenkins, Lambs, Burackers ...

DS: Now that's the only German one so far.

DH: Umhmm.

DS: Yeah.

DH: Pettits.

DS: That would be French, wouldn't it?

DH: Yeah. P-E-T-T-I-T, Pettits.

DS: The rest of them, Weakley, Gray, Jenkins and Lamb are English.

DH: English.

DS: And the Burackers are the Germans.

DS & DH: And the Pettits are the French.

DS: Fascinating. Did they do alot of visiting back and forth, back in the mountains?

DH: Among themselves, you mean, here in one community?

DS: Umhmm.

DH: Yes. In fact everybody, the minute anybody had a sickness or a sorrow or anything, everybody else took something to them and stayed and sat up at nights with them and mourned with them and loved them.

DS: Oh, that's great.

DH: That's a beautiful story.

DS: Yes.

DH: It doesn't make a difference what happens, everybody will come to you.

DS: Yeah.

DH: If I should call in the middle of the night for help, I'd get it.

DS: Umhmm. Right ... they'd come breakin' down your door.

DH: They'd come ... to see what had happened.

DS: Right. Did they get together evenings and sing?

DH: Yeah, they'd have sewing bees and quilting parties.

DS: Oh! Sewing and quilting! Yee-e-es!

DH: And they did sing. Because they had quite a little, well, after the mission workers came, they had quite a little band up here.

DS: Oh ...

DH: They were very musical. The people themselves were musical.

DS: When they played ...

DH: When they played by ear.

DS: Yeah.

DH: The young man plays the organ plays by ear, but he plays beautifully, just beautifully. And there we had quite a swanky organ, and boy, did he make that organ ~~ring~~!
(Laughter)

DS: Oh! That's wonderful!
Did they mainly though, before .. you know... before they started singing here ...

DH: They had guitars.

DS: Guitars and banjos.

DH: Banjos.

DS: No dulcimers.

DH: Violins ... and dulcimers.

DS: They did have dulcimers ?!

DH: Umhmm.

DS: They did ?!

DH: Umhmm.

DS: That's the first we have heard of dulcimers!!

DH: Umhmm.

DS: We thought that they were mainly down in North Carolina. But there were dulcimers here.

DH: There were one or two up here.

DS: Great !

DH: In the early days. I don't think there's a one up here now.

DS: No, no, but I mean back then.

DH: Way back.

DS: Well. Whoa ... wait till they hear that ! Wait till they hear that !
Jew's Harp ... did they play Jew's Harp?

DS:

DH: You mean a harmonica?

DS: Uh .. I think it was just sort of a twangy thing.

DH: Oh, the twangy thing. I don't know.

DS: Umhmm.

DH: They played harmonicas.

DS: They did. Unhuh. Aside from the hymns, what were their favorite songs?

DH: Well, of course they had alot of local songs.

DS: Have you any names?

DH: No, no names.

DS: 'Turkey in the Straw' ?

DH: I was gonna say, the regular old ... 'Comin' Around the Mountain' and 'Turkey in the Straw' and ...

DS: 'Golden Slippers' ?

DH: Oh yes. They played the usual ones.

DS: Hmmm. Did you ever hear a song ... I have no words for it, called the 'Fox Hunt'?

DH: I don't think so.

DS: I am on the trail of that "Fox Hunt".

DH: But I have _____.

DS: When the tape is off and we're not wasting time, remind me to tell you about that because it's absolutely marvelous.

Now I was wondering about their courtships. Did they ,,, do you think ... I know that, from what I've heard, nobody got married without coming and talking to you first.

DH: Well, most of them did.

DS: Yes. Do you think that they were real love matches or do you think it was because she could cook pretty good and she thought, 'Well, he's a good provider and I've gotta get a husband,' so they got together.

DH: No, I think they had real sincere love in the family.

DS: Umhmm. Good to know. Great!

DH: Real sincere love.

DS: Hmmm. Did they court much?

DH: There were very few broken families. There were some but not many.

DS: Yeah. Uh ... did the fellows do alot of courting or ... ?

DH: You mean with many of the girls ?

DS: No, when they zeroed in on a girl, would he court her pretty much?

DH: I'm sure they would.

DS: Umhmm. What were the weddings like?

DH: Well, the only weddings that I know of course were the weddings that were in the church or in their own homes.

DS: Did they get all dressed up in white the way nowadays or did they just put on their best dress and best suit?

DH: Well, I'm sure in the early days they did.

DS: Yes.

DH: But since the church has been here, they've had weddings in the church. We've had some lovely weddings in the church.

DS: Yes, umhmm.

DH: White veils and everything.

DS: Oh ... great ... yeah?

DH: But I'm sure in the early days they'd be married in the local home or the minister's. They'd go out to a minister who lots of times because they could always get to a minister to marry them there. And several of the men up here rarely were here, as strange as that may seem. But the Norfolk and Western ran through Stanley and several of the men worked there on the railroad mill.

DS: Unhuh. So they weren't home that much then, were they?

DH: Well, not those men.

DS: They took their wives then, to stay at home and take care of the gardens and everything.

DH: Umhmm.

DS: Do you know how, before the Mission was here how they used...

DH: You know the Mission's been here since Nineteen hundred and Nine.

DS: Oh.

DH: The Church has been here. The first ministers came up here in

Nineteen Hundred and ... there were itinerant preachers who came first and and just came in and preached and baptized and performed weddings and buried the dead.

No one ever came to stay and then the first ministers that came up here were Reverend Walter Strickler of the Brethren Church and Reverend B.B.White of the Methodist Church came up in the early years of Nineteen Hundred and Four and Five and held preaching services. And then Reverend Mister Taylor and Mister Herb Cave taught Sunday School but there was no permanent establishment until the work here on the building. Mister - the Reverend Josiah Ellis came in in Nineteen Hundred and Six and the church - the old church was built in Nineteen Hundred and Nine. And from then on that was the mission home. Not the mission house, but the work was going on.

DS: Well, how did they do their funerals?

DH: Well, when I first came here, there was quite a prolonged wailing service.

DS: Yeah.

DH: And that is a beautiful and sacred service for the dead.

DS: Did they, uh ... well, I have heard some stories that they used to ... the women would bathe the body and put it near a window and then, um ... leave, uh, you know, in a couple days after people had come and viewed him and they'd dig a hole and have a coffin made and put him into it. Now, is that the way you have heard it?

DH: In the early days of course, we did not have a funeral director or anything like that. And we'd have our own doin'. I have washed many a body myself and prepared them for burial. Of course the people themselves made many of the caskets in the early days.

DS: Did they use real headstones with inscriptions on it?

DH: Not such that you'd find in a cemetery outside but they marked it, yes.

DS: They did. That's good.

DH: There are many, many markings on the stones that are very ancient stones.

DS: Markings of what kind? Dates ...

DH: ... and the names.

DS: So they could write! Yeah.

DH: They had been an extremely fine people all the way through.

DS: Oh, yes.

DH: They are a noble people.

DS: They're a highly intelligent people.

DH: Extremely.

DS: I think one of the most honorable of all people.

DH: I think so myself, yes.

DS: Yes.

DH: I just wish the rest of the world were like them.

DS: I agree 100% and let's hope the rest of the world doesn't come in here and start corrupting them.

When they came to visit you, which I'm sure they did because I'm going to hate leaving you, (Laughter) did they ever tell any ghost stories or things of that kind?

DH: Not ghost stories so much as early things that happened in the early days and their old family experiences. Nothing though in the way of ghost stories.

DS: Do you remember any of those stories?

DH: Well, they were personal stories.

DS: Oh. Alright, yeah. OK.

I had quite a problem talking with one man one day because I was asking him if his family believed in ghosts and haunts. And he couldn't get the word 'haunts'. He didn't know what I was talking about and finally he said, "You mean 'hants'?" (Laughter) And once we hit on that we were alright.

What were their special holidays? Did they celebrate the Fourth of July?

DH: Well, of course Christmas was ...

DS: Christmas was the best.

DH: ... one of the great occasions and children's birthdays were always special.

DS: Oh!

DH: And they'd always did something special in the family for their own families their own days.

DS: Yeah.

DH: And the Fourth of July, of course they knew about it and ... but until the Mission came and then we used to have Fourth of July parties and had fireworks and all the trimmings and then we used to have a soup.
(Laughter)

DS: On a hot day! (More laughter)

DH: Regular old Brunswick Stew soup.

DS: Good!

DH: But it was the best soup that anybody ever had in all of the world!

DS: You are right, yeah.

DH: And we used to have a sale on that day and we'd sell all kind of hand made articles and things of that kind.

DS: This helped the people.

DH: And we sold lemonade and we sold home made ice cream and Brunswick Stew and sandwiches and things of that kind.

DS: Would you mind giving one ~~next year so I could~~ come?

DH: But we had one on the ninth of July! I'll have to put you on my list for calling up and telling you when we're going to have another one.

DS: Oh please do because I would love it !

DH: I have two or three people in Luray that I call up. Judge Woodward is one. He always wants to come.

DS: Umm ... the childrens' birthdays ... how did they celebrate those? Did they give them gifts? They didn't have much money.

DH: No, they generally baked a cake.

DS: Yeah.

DH: And something special that that child liked.

DS: Yeah. That makes much more sense than giving lots of presents that the child can't really appreciate.

DH: I think so too. Now that they have money of course, they give gifts and things and some of them even go overboard and get too expensive of gifts and the child use^s it for a little while and forgets it.

DS: Christmas ... how did they celebrate Christmas?

DH: Christmas is a holy day.

DS: They really considered it holy ... very fine.

DH: Christmas is a holy day. They celebrated with gifts and with church. And it really was more a holy day than a holiday.

DS: Oh, that's wonderful! That's the way it should be.

DH: It's the way it should be. Of course, there are lots of innovations now. The world is creeping in, I'm afraid.

DS: Umhmm.

DH: There are many in the community who do not live near the church and don't come. And yet if we ever do anything like building the parish hall or diggin' a ditch or anything, everybody would come and give us their work.

DS: Yeah.

Oh, goodness. You know, you have told us some things that we did not, did not know. This is simply great.

You talk about the crops they raised and the animals. Did they do much hunting?

DH: Oh, yes. They always hunted.

DS: Was there anything much left to hunt?

DH: They had to hunt for their food in the early days. They hunted pheasants, they hunted birds, they hunted squirrels, they hunted possums, they hunted groundhogs.

DS: Oh yes, of course there were groundhogs, yes. Yeah. Raccoons ... were there raccoons around?

DH: A few, yes.

DS: Not many.

DH: We still had ... we still had quite a few things around.

DS: Ummmmm. You were here when the resettlement took place.

DH: But it didn't touch us. The only thing that it touched was two people at the very top of the community. And they were very elderly people and Bishop Mason who was then our steeplemason went to Washington and got permission for those two people to live in their little homes up in the top of the community and never to know that the Park took their land. The land was owned by a wealthy farmer outside and so they did have no reason to know that it was incorporated into the Park area.

DS: And they lived their lives ...

DH: And they lived there until they went without ever being disturbed.

DS: Great. I've heard there were some families that that was done to.

DH: But the other families over in the outer section that were moved out lock, stock and barrel.

DS: Yes.

DH: But Bishop Mason said that nothing like that was going to happen to our community.

DS: Did you hear any stories of how they adjusted?

DH: Miserably.

DS: It must have been terrible because one type life and then suddenly - thrust into another.

DH: Leave their bathtubs for feedbins. It just didn't mean anything to them. They were very unhappy, extremely unhappy. I think most of them have little by little moved away, have gone.

And we were grateful. It was a terrible thing to have done.

DS: In a way, don't you think it was a help for them though?

DH: I think it would have been more of a help if they had let the church grow to its _____ instead of being able to go into the other communities.

DS: Ye-e-e-s. Because as it was, they did not have an education, or what they got was very skimpy. They had really no way of making a living anymore.

DH: Sometimes you don't have to have all of the things you think you have to have to live and they lived happily. And it's much better to live happily with less than racing and rushing to get up alot.

DS: You're right, yes.

DH: When I went into, when Peters first went into Basin and Cubbage^{*} and Keystone area and Bader left, I went up in that area in the afternoons on Sunday and held services and then I would run back and forth over in those during the week to see about the people and hear the _____ and carry things to them that they needed.

DS: Oh, they must have been so grateful to see you coming. How did you get there? By car?

DH: Umhmm. I had a young lady who lived with me in Rockhouse who was a mountain girl who had come to work at the Mission at the very early age of eleven, when she used to stop from school and wash the dishes for the teachers and workers there. And she lived with me after that for twenty-three years. And she would drive, she learned to drive and we'd go where no car was ever meant to be put.

DS: I was going to say, there were no roads.

* Basin and Cubbage^{*} are two adjacent hollows just southwest of Tanners Ridge. Keystone area? Keystone area is area at base of Basin Hollow where Cubbage^{all} + Basin come together. bottom
Ben

DH: We put it! (Laughter)

But we went all through those areas. I have been up and down these hills in every conceivable contraption. I have been carried up to some areas on a stretcher. I have gone to other areas in a jeep and I have been on every road that anything could possibly be put, in order to get there.

DS: It is small wonder that they came to you with all their problems.

DH: And I have loved them all, I have loved them all.

DS: And we're not going to go into any names but if you could tell us just what some of their problems were. Were they marital problems, or were they ... ?

DH: Occasionally, not too often, 'cause home are very sacred here and most of the time the beautiful. But the heartaches, sorrows, accidents, distresses.

DS: What were the most frequent accidents that they had?

DH: Bones, cuts ...

DS: Snakebite.

DH: A few, not too many. They had several but not the tremendous numbers that we might have had considering how many snakes we had. Because of course, we do have Timber Rattlesnakes and Copperheads and Moccasins and Coral Snakes and all kinds of poisonous kinds.

DS: I think it's sweet that when they'd have a heartache, they'd come to you.

DH: They'd have alot of heartaches like everybody else does. And they'd have a good big shoulder to cry on.

DS: Without a sounding board, you'd fall apart.

DH: Yeah. That's why you'd rather be able to stick together alot of times so you could get it off. And I'd hear one side and then I'd hear the other side and neither side knew that the other side had been here.
(Laughter)

DS: Did they worry about their children ... that maybe their child was a bit obstreperous - that he didn't want to follow orders, that he didn't want to work the garden?

DH: Well, children are children.

DS: Right.

DH: And naturally they don't always do the things you want them to do.

DS: And they recognized that.

DH: We haven't had too many that have gone far enough to be into any great trouble. And I had the sheriff tell me once that after the church came here that as far as his office was concerned, there wouldn't be any sheriff up here.

Before the church came up here, that he ran up here all the time. But after the church came and settled here in this community, his duties were lessened to almost nothing.

DS: Well, there was a lot of bootlegging up here before that.

DH: Umhmm.

DS: And when people get drunk, they do things they shouldn't do.

DH: That's true. But after the church came, it completely changed the whole atmosphere of this community. That doesn't mean that everybody in the community belongs into the church. But great numbers of them have been baptized, great numbers of them have been confirmed and of course _____ church. But a lot of them don't come and, uh ... _____ Christian spirit is there.

DS: Um ... well ... you just talk because you're the one who has been living here and that has heard the stories from the people and know what you want to tell that will help ... help us make this the true story of the people.

DH: Well, I think one of the loveliest things that happened was after I fell and was confined to the chair. I went ... was sent to the Georgia Women's Springs Foundation by the Polio March of Dimes here in Page County, hopefully that I would be able to get back on my feet. When that was not possible, then I began to wonder what I could do because of I felt it wasn't fair to go back to Rockhouse, the Mission Home because I wanted them to have somebody there who could go out to them, and I couldn't anymore so I resigned.

And then I began to look around for something else to do and just at that time the University of Virginia Hospital was looking for an assistant chaplain and I became the assistant chaplain and served for I think five years. And all over the hospital and all hours of the day and night in a motorized chair. I couldn't possibly have pushed it. And even with the motorized chair which was very slow, when the orderlies would see me, they would say, "Hold your motor off, Deaconess! I'll run with ya!" And they would come and run if it was an emergency. Or if they called me for an emergency, I would say, "Send me either the night watchman or a policeman or an orderly or somebody that can get me there quicker."

DS: Then how did you get back here?

DH: Well, that was one of the beautiful things that I was gonna tell you.

The young man that ... well, man and his wife and family that lived just above me here - the house above me knew my love for here and that someday I wanted to come back. On Mothers' Day he and his

wife came over to Charlottesville and brought me the deed to this little piece of land because he said he wanted to be sure that I had a place to come back to.

And I was going to build a little home here and they had already dug the foundation. The people had dug the foundation for me and they had laid the cornerstones. They laid the foundation with cement and then my mother was ... was stricken with several strokes and I had to come back quicker. So I ordered a mobile home and the middle of this house is the mobile home. And as soon as it was placed then I brought her here to take care of her here because I knew that this was the one spot in all the world that I could get help to take care of her. And I brought her here and she lived here for eighteen months before her death.

And the people of the community were marvelous to me in helping me to take care of her. I would get a help from Luray. I had a practical nurse from Luray who would come for an eight hour shift and then I would have the sixteen hours. And they would always come in and sit for two or three hours and say, "Now Deaconess, you lie down and rest and we'll stay right here until you're awake." And they would stay for me until I could rest and then they would go home to do their chores. So she lived here with me for those last months.

DS: My. They are wonderful people.

Now, about their schooling. Have you any idea what the schooling for the people who were in the mountains was? Did they come down here to school ?

DH: Not the ones that were on Tanners Ridge because as soon as Miss Hale went up there, there was a school, a log house built for a school. And she had a teacher up there with her who taught.

Before that time, some of the ... the ministers, some of the local men here would go, walk up _____ Path and have church up there for them on Sundays. But there was no school until the worker went up there and the school was established up there. Here ...

DS: Now, did they self-teach themselves? (Phone rings) Go ahead.
(Tape recorder shut off)

... about schools, weren't we? And, and the fact that the majority of them had not really until ...

DH: In the early, early days they had not had a formal, what ^{we} ~~you'd~~ call a formal education.

DS: Yes. Do you think that they taught ~~their~~, within their own families how they could read and write?

DH: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure they did as far as they were able. I mean after all, they didn't have but so much.

But there was a little log school right across the road from the ... cross on the other side of the creek that was built of logs, in the early, early days. And then they built a school house down the road about two miles. A two room school house and children went there for a number of years. And then the bus began to come out and take the children to Stanley and uh

DS: And theⁿ they began getting more.

DH: And then they began to get more. Now the children go all the way to the Page County High School between Shenandoah and Stanley.

DS: Now I was just thinking it would have been hard, I imagine to have done the self-teaching after working hard, as they did all day ... and with insufficient lighting at night.

DH: Oil lamps don't ...

DS: Yes, they didn't particularly feel like sitting down and teachⁱng a child ABC's, did they?

DH: Well, I wouldn't t^hink so but I expect they gave them everything they could, whatever they had, because they did give themselves to those children.

DS: Mnhmm. I imagine that ... I mean, if anything happened to a child ... tragedy was awful, wasn't it?

DH: Well, it is because they are so closely knit. They are tremendously close.

DS: Did they really have around thirteen to sixteen children in a family?

DH: Yes, I had one family over in the Cubbage - no, that's the Key^tone area that had twenty-three.

DS: All one wife??!

DH: All one mother ! (Laughter)

DS: Oh, my heavens.

DH: And there was one family up here that had thirteen and oⁿe had fourteen when I came. Of course one or two of the babies were born after I came and numbers of them ...

DS: This was a tremendous amount of work and drain on the women then, wasn't it ?

DH: Big ... big job.

DS: Yes. Did the women live as long as the men ?

DH: I think most of the women seemed to have lived longer than the men because we've got more women up here now at my age than we have men.

DS: If I had twenty-three children, I assure you I would have gone before that !

DH: The woman who had thirteen children is still living and she's much older than I am and is really marvelous, just wonderful. She goes all over the country visiting children because some of them have gone to Florida and some have gone to North Carolina and some have gone to Ohio and she goes out and visits each one of them.

DS: Isn't this wonderful.

DH: Or they come and get her and take her home with them and bring her back and ...

DS: Yeah. Imagine, ^{what} the size of the dining room table would have to be like -- to seat all those children.

DH: It was wonderful ! (Laughter)

DS: Or did they do it in shifts ?

DH: Oh, I'm sure they would have had to have done it in shifts. You'd hardly have a room big enough for that much.

DS: Yeah, you'd be throwing a party every night.

DH: Mnhmm. I'm sure they had to do it in groups.

DS: Yeah. And you say they raised chickens, too.

DH: They raised chickens and turkeys.

DS: That helped, yeah.

DH: I don't think we said chickens and turkeys. Although ...

DS: No, I don't think we did.
Did they do their own smoking of the hogs ?

DH: Oh yes. Ones that smoked them. Most of them eat it fresh.

DS: Oh. Mnhmm. Yeah.

DH: Even today most of them like it fresh rather than the smoked.

DS: They do. Have to eat it awful fast, though before it goes bad. They didn't have freezers in those days.

DH: No, but they had very tightly sealed uh ... well, I'd call it a pantry, but they called it a building ...

DS: Yes. Did they eat much beef ?

DH: Very little. When I first came in.

DS: That's what it seems to me.

DH: When I first came in.

DS: Mnhmm.

DH: They do now, but not at first. They ate as a rule hog meat or fish.

DS: Oh, fish, of course.

DH: And birds ... chickens.

DS: Turkeys.

DH: Turkeys.

DS: Did any of the people use any of the mountain land for pasture ?

DH: There isn't much flat land up here. Most of it is rollings, up and down. But of course they'd have little areas and they used it for pasture and their smaller fields and used it for pasture.

DS: So then that would be just for the cows or horses if they had one. Or did they use mules ?

DH: No, they used horses or mules.

DS: Oh ! Mnhmm. Yeah. What is your ... I know what the answer's going to be ... what is your most vivid recollection of the people when you first came ?

DH: I came to visit the Rockhouse first. I had seen pictures of it and of the work that was being carried on here. When I was in training in New York, one of the workers came up and talked about it and I just immediately wanted to come. And I tried my best to get here but somebody was already at Rockhouse and when the worker left, I asked for the privilege of coming.

And the Bishop thought that, being on crutches, I couldn't do it. But I begged him to at least let me try. And boy, if I couldn't walk up frontwards, I could back up backwards. And so he said, "Well, I'll let you stay until the snow comes, but when the bad weather comes, you may have to leave."

Well, the snow came and it came in a nineteen inch snow, and he came for Confirmation on that same Sunday. And I thought, "Oh dear, here I go !" But after the service the boys had carried me from the Rockhouse over to the Church in a rocking chair because I didn't have a rolling chair at that time. I did not have a wheelchair. I used my crutches entirely. But they carried me over in a chair and brought me home and when he came, the Bishop came in,

I thought, "Oh dear, I know what he's going to say now."
 And when he did he said, "I want to talk to you." Well, there were several people that had come over with us and I didn't want them to ~~be there~~ to be there when he said it because I knew I was going to cry. And I said, "Well, let's go in the study."

And he said, "No, what I have to say to you I can say right here."

And that didn't help a bit 'cause I was still scared. And finally he said, "I just want to tell you that if the people love you like they do, I wouldn't move you for anything in the world."

And I drew one good, deep breath and just thanked the Lord.

DS: Yes.

DH: I then I stayed there for twenty-three years.

DS: Now your first recollection, when you first got here.

DH: I thought it was the most gorgeous spot in the whole world! (Laughter)
 I thought it was as near Heaven as I could get and stay down here on Earth.

DS: Yes, right. But did the people seem to you, coming from New York, ill dressed, or poorly dressed, or ...

DH: I knew their circumstances before I came and I love people; I don't look at clothes.

DS: Oh, no! I don't believe that for a second! (Laughter)

DH: I love people, so I didn't really care.

DS: Appearance ...

DH: Appearances ... they did the best they could do and that was all that was necessary.

DS: So that is your most vivid recollection ... that they were wonderful people.

DH: They're just wonderful people.

DS: And it stood out, even though you didn't know them by name?

DH: I didn't know their name, but just to look at them, you know that they're grand.

DS: Mmmmm. Yeah. Well ... and so they had dulcimers. Did they have any dances?

DH: Yes, they square danced. They had square dances. They didn't do the regular formal dances but they did square dances.

DS: Did they do that in the homes or ... ?

DH: Well, we had a building that was built for a community hall and they did square dancing there. And I ^{don't} doubt they danced a little in their homes. Their homes weren't too big, you know, but they would dance.

DS: Speaking of homes, about how many rooms were in a home ?

DH: Well, it depends on the size of the family of course, but two rooms and a lead-to kitchen or maybe three rooms or depending on the size of family as to how ... how big a home would be.

DS: So the sort of doubled up when they went to bed.

DH: They were quite ... had alot of doubling. But now, as you have seen coming up to the community, you know the size houses now and the improvements and the ... Well, when I first came, there was only one painted house in the community.

DS: Really.

DH: And that belonged to the postmas... man that ran the rural route but...

DS: He had a good enough job that he could afford it.

DH: But little by little the people have painted and added, put in inside bathrooms and dining rooms to their houses, papered their walls and they have painted their walls and they have even _____

DS: Did they have hand made furniture mainly, in the beginning?

DH: Yes, chairs and stools and tables were made by hand and I presume beds originally.

DS: Sure, I imagine they were. Right. They were just as comfortable.

DH: I think they'd be more comfortable than some.

DS: Yes. OK, can you think of anything that would help us with this? You've told us so much.

Were there any jealousies between groups that lived in one area and groups in another?

DH: Well, most of the people that lived in the communities or hollows as they were called in those days but we call them communities now, pretty much lived among themselves and of course there was a great deal of intermarraige among themselves. But we had very little physical or mental or eyestrain or any of that difficulties because of those intermarraiges. Of course there was the differences of families of Weakleys and Grays and Pettits and Jenkins and Burackers ...

DS: Enough to ...

DH: Enough for to make a good mixture so that we didn't get too close kin relationships.

DS: So really the people in one hollow didn't visit over into another.

DH: Very rarely. They didn't visit among them.. Very rarely.

DS: Yeah.

DH: The people from here to Tanners Ridge probably visited more than anybody else. And that was due to the ministers coming here for services would ask some of the men to walk up with him through the mountain up to Tanners Ridge and I'm sure that's how developed.

DS: Right, yes.

DH: But other than that they rarely visited from hollow to hollow or community to community.

DS: Mmhmm, yeah. I think this is great.

DH: I think it's wonderful. (Laughter)

DS: Want to start at the beginning... from the beginning again?

DH: Mmhmm.

DS: You said at first, what?

DH: At first there was a great deal of drinking, moonshining, but that has, I believe, completely gone. I don't think we've had anything of that kind for years.

DS: no.

DH: At Christmas there was quite a celebration and moonshining and shooting fireworks. Rarely anything happened as far as anybody getting hurt.

DS: No.

DH: Just the hilarity of it. But now it really is a completely different atmosphere to Christmas.

DS: Do you say they still shoot off fireworks at Christmas?

DH: They still shoot off fireworks at Christmas. And I never can get used to it, so when I hear it I get alarmed and then I think, "Uh-uh, this is just fireworks. But occasionally, they still shoot off fireworks.

DS: Were the women ... you say had quilting parties and sewing bees ... were they ... they were pretty handy.

DH: They had wonderful craft ideas and practice for making things. And of course, they had to make things out of nothing. And so they hooked rugs, they wove baskets, they made hand made stools and chairs and furniture and things of that kind. A lot of the men whittled and made toys out of the whittling. Horses and dolls and things for the children to play with. That was the extent of what they had in the earliest early days.

DS: Have they continued the traditions?

DH: Yes, they still do quilting and making of the patchwork quilts and things of that kind. They do ... I don't believe there are many now that do much of the weaving or the stools, the making of the splints and things. There are one or two who still do and I don't believe anybody hooks rugs now that I know of in the community. We did have the lady across the road from me who hooked rugs. She does quilts and things of that kind still. There's a great deal of her work that is sold up on the Skyline Drive at the concessions. In fact, they order hundreds of her mops that she makes that are in the form of a doll's head.

DS: Oh, yes.

DH: They order sometimes several hundred of those at a time.

DS: And those are the dolls that the children used to play with, aren't they?

DH: No, these are made out of a mop. These are made out of a mop.

DS: Well, didn't they use dried apples and things of that kind?

DH: Yes, mmhmm. Did all the drying of things to eat ... pears and apples.

DS: Yeah, well ... didn't they used to make straw dolls, too?

DH: Shucks. Shuck dolls. Out of corn shucks. They make them nowadays. These people haven't kept up with shuck dolls. There are communities in which they still make the shuck dolls, but not here.

DS: Yeah. You were mentioning while we were not on the tape about Christmas presents.

DH: Well, in their homes, they baked things at Christmas for people and they made things like that - home things that they could give one another. But they didn't have what we call Christmas presents. So when the Mission was established, they began to give gifts to each family.

DS: Where would you get the money to do this?

DH: Well, through various friends on the outside. I would speak at churches

and tell them of the need for Christmas gifts and money for Christmas gifts. And I wanted especially to have money sometimes rather than gifts because sometimes they would send gifts that weren't appropriate. And I wanted to be able to get certain things so they began to give me money in order that I could buy. And the H & H store in town would ... Mr. Helly would let me go downstairs before the store was open for Christmas and buy everything I wanted for my Christmas tree. And then we made bags out of cloth, green and red bags. And each family ... I had a book with every member of a family listed in it. And we had one room upstairs that was a big bedroom and we cleared it out and put up tables and spread out all the gifts in different groupings all around. Then I would take the book and we'd go around and select a gift for everybody in the family and wrap it up with stickers and ribbons and everything, just everything. And then put them in these bags and the label the bag with the family name, the father's name and deliver them on Christmas day.

Pauline, the young woman that lived with me would dress up as Santa Claus and sit on the hood of the car and one of the young men would drive me and we would go up the hollow and deliver at every house and ring the bells and

and we would deliver the Christmas bags to every family in the community.

DS: And none of them felt as though this was charity, did they?

DH: Oh, no !! It wasn't charity !! This was just genuine love and they knew it!

DS: Because they hated charity. Right, right. Because they were a proud people.

DH: They're a wonderful, proud people. They're a grand people.

No, this was not charity. This was genuine love and they knew it. But they would look forward to it from year to year. Everybody would get a gift from great-grandmother to the tiniest newborn baby had gifts. And the gifts were provided by friends outside ... from churches and from individual people and many of them as I said, gave me money in order that, if I didn't get enough teenaged gifts or if I didn't get men's gifts or if I didn't get something special that I needed, I could go out and buy the things that I needed. But it was ... Christmas was a gorgeous time.

DS: You must ... in preparing for that.

DH: Unfortunately, most of the churches didn't send gifts until the last ... well, it's been three weeks till Christmas. So we had to sometimes work all night long into the nights, sleep a few hours and get up and do our daily work and then stay up until four and five o'clock in the morning wrapping gifts and getting them ready. But it was well worth it when you saw the joy that they brought.

DS: Of course, yes.

DH: We did it. The last year that I was at the Mission House, we had then acquired not only this community but the Basin Hollow and the Cabbage Hollow and the Keystone area and by that time, the last number that we wrapped was a thousand and forty-seven peoples' gifts.

Now each person received not only just one thing but the women, for instance, would always try to get enough aprons so everybody had an apron but also everybody had a pretty handkerchief and a bowl or a dish or some kitchen utensil or some ... something that was for the home, that they could use in a home. The men unfortunately weren't so lucky because they came out with socks or handkerchiefs (laughter) or ties or something of that nature. But the children ... we made a real effort to give them something to wear. Hoods, a knitted hood or sweaters or socks or mittens or something that they could wear. Plus a coloring book and crayons or a reading book and toys and things of that kind. But every person in the community had gifts and they were all wrapped up with ribbons and stickers. And we licked those stickers ! (laughter) There wasn't any ScotchTape in those days! But we wrapped everything and everything was as pretty as it would have been in anybody's home.

Of course, the Rock-ettes helped me tremendously with giving me their Christmas wrappings and ribbons and bows and things from year to year. For years and years they brought some type to me. And they sent me many gifts and sent me much money in order to buy what I wanted.

But I've had a wonderful time; I've had a gorgeous time. No wonder I wanted to come back here to live !